

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system, comprising:

a plurality of agents for receiving and sending formatted information via a network;

and

a priority rule-based coalescing mechanism connecting to the plurality of agents via the network for coalescing the formatted information, received from the plurality of agents, within a coalesced file according to corresponding priority rules defined with respect to each of the plurality of agents to generate an updated coalesced file.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein each of the agent is associatd with a device group that comprises at least one device and collects information from the at least one device in the device group.

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein each of the plurality of agents comprises:

a device interface for interacting with the at least one device in the device group to collect information;

an information formatting mechanism for organizing the information, collected by the device interface from the at least one device, according to a pre-defined syntax to generate formatted information; and

a network communication mechanism for communicating with the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, sending the formatted information to the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism via the network.

4. A priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, comprising:
a network communication mechanism for receiving formatted information from an agent;
a priority rule database for storing priority rules defined with respect to the agent; and
a coalescing mechanism for coalescing the formatted information in a coalesced file according to the priority rules, retrieved from the priority rule database, to generate an updated coalesced file.

5. The mechanism according to claim 4, further comprising:
a priority rule set-up mechanism for setting up the priority rules for the agent, the priority rules defining the priority of the agent;
a priority rule accessing mechanism for retrieving the priority rules, from the priority rule database after the formatted information is received from the agent, to provide associated priority rules to the coalescing mechanism to coalesce the formatted information.

6. The mechanism according to claim 5, further comprising:
a coalesced file initialization mechanism for initializing the coalesced file to which the agent appends formatted information;
a parsing mechanism for parsing the priority rules, retrieved by the priority rule access mechanism from the priority rule database, before the coalescing mechanism coalesces the formatted information;

a transformation mechanism for transforming the formatted information, before the formatted information is coalesced by the coalescing mechanism, according to the priority rules; and

a coalesced file database for storing the updated coalesced file, generated by the coalescing mechanism.

7. A method, comprising:

sending, by a priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, an inquiry to an agent to gather information from a device group associated with the agent;

collecting, by the agent, the information from the device group according to the inquiry;

constructing formatted information based on the information obtained from the device group according to a pre-defined syntax;

sending the formatted information to the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism;

retrieving, by the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and

coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalesced file.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the sending an inquiry includes sending the inquiry with a coalesced file.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the sending the formatted information comprises:

appending the formatted information, generated by the constructing, to the coalesced file; and

sending the coalesced file, appended with the formatted information, to the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein the constructing according to a pre-defined syntax includes constructing according to XML.

11. A method for a priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, comprising:

sending an inquiry to an agent to gather information from a device group associated with the agent;

receiving formatted information from the agent, formatted information being constructed according to a pre-defined syntax;

retrieving priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and

coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalesced file.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the sending an inquiry includes sending the inquiry with a coalesced file.

13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the receiving the formatted information includes receiving the formatted information with the coalesced file wherein the formatted information is appended.

14. A method, comprising:

receiving, by an agent associating with a device group that comprises at least one device, information from a device of the at least one device;

constructing formatted information based on the information received from the device according to a pre-defined syntax;

sending the formatted information to a priority rule-based coalescing mechanism;

retrieving, by the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and

coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an update coalesced file.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the coalescing the formatted information comprises:

coalescing the formatted information with respect to a coalesced file according to the priority rules; and

generating the updated coalesced file based on the result from the coalescing.

16. The method according to claim 14, further comprising:

setting up the priority rules associated with the agent prior to the retrieving; and

transforming the formatted information prior to the coalescing formatted information according to the priority rules.

17. A method for a priority rule-based coalsecing mechanism, comprising:
receiving formatted information from an agent associated with a device group comprising at least one device, formatted information being constructed based on the information, obtained from a device of the at least one device, according to a pre-defined syntax;
retrieving priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and
coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalseced file.

18. The method according to claim 17, wherein the coalescing the formatted information comprises:
coalescing the formatted information with respect to a coalesced file according to the priority rules; and
generating the updated coalesced file based on the result from the coalescing.

19. The method according to claim 17, further comprising:
setting up the priority rules associated with the agent prior to the retrieving; and
transforming the formatted information prior to the coalescing according to the priority rules assocaited with the agent.

20. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program, the program, when executed causing:

sending, by a priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, an inquiry to an agent to gather information from a device group associated with the agent;

collecting, by the agent, the information from the device group according to the inquiry;

constructing formatted information based on the information obtained from the device group according to a pre-defined syntax;

sending the formatted information to the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism;

retrieving, by the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and

coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalseced file.

21. The medium according to claim 20, wherein the sending of the formatted information comprises:

appending the formatted information, generated by the constructing, to a coalesced file that is received together with the inquiry; and

sending the coalseced file, appended with the formatted information, to the priority rule-based coalsecing mechanism.

22. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program for a priority rule-based coalsecing mechanism, the program, when executed causing:

sending an inquiry to an agent to gather information from a device group associated with the agent;

receiving formatted information from the agent, formatted information being constructed according to a pre-defined syntax;

retrieving priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and

coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalesced file.

23. The medium according to claim 22, wherein

the sending an inquiry includes sending the inquiry with a coalesced file;

the receiving the formatted information includes receiving the formatted information with the coalesced file wherein the formatted information is appended.

24. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program, the program, when executed, causing:

receiving, by an agent associating with a device group that comprises at least one device, information from a device of the at least one device;

constructing formatted information based on the information received from the device according to a pre-defined syntax;

sending the formatted information to a priority rule-based coalescing mechanism;

retrieving, by the priority rule-based coalescing mechanism, priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and

coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalesced file.

25. The medium according to claim 24, further comprising code, which when executed causes:

setting up the priority rules associated with the agent prior to the retrieving; and
transforming the formatted information prior to the coalescing formatted information according to the priority rules.

26. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program for a priority rule-based coalsecing mechanism, the program, when executed, causing:

receiving formatted information from an agent associated with a device group comprising at least one device, formatted information being constructed based on the information, obtained from a device of the at least one device, according to a pre-defined syntax;

retrieving priority rules associated with the agent from a priority rule database; and
coalescing the formatted information based on the priority rules to generate an updated coalseced file.

27. The medium according to claim 26, further comprising code, which when exeucted causes:

setting up the priority rules associated with the agent prior to the retrieving; and

